en

Publication | 03.10.2008

Situation in Belarus

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

Tabled by ***Elisabeth Schroedter and Milan Horá?ek***

on behalf of the Greens/EFA Group

The European Parliament,

 having regard to its previous resolutions on the situation in Belarus,

 having regard to the OSCE Election Observation Mission Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions of 29 September 2008,

 having regard to the Council Conclusions of 15 and 16 September 2008,

 having regard to the declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU concerning the release of Sergei Parsiukevich and Andrei Kim,

 having regard to the Commission's declaration on 21 November 2006 of the European Union's readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP),

 having regard to Rule 103(2) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas, in spite on some minor improvements, the OSCE Election Observation Mission concluded in a preliminary statement that the parliamentary elections of 28 September ultimately fell short of OSCE commitments for democratic elections; whereas the report stated, in particular, that the process deteriorated considerably during the vote count and that several cases of deliberate falsification of results were observed,

B. whereas, out of a total of 263 candidates, 70 opposition candidates stood in the elections, after not being allowed to run on many occasions, but none of them was elected to parliament,

C. whereas President Lukashenko publicly called on 10 July for the elections to be conducted openly and democratically, and reiterated this during a television appearance on 29 August, promising that the elections would be unprecedented in terms of fairness,

D. whereas the elections took place in a strictly controlled environment and according to rules that significantly constrained campaigning and the role played by political parties; whereas regulations

concerning the printing and distribution of campaign materials were highly restrictive,

E. whereas the request of the United Democratic Forces (UDF) to engage the government in an open dialogue on the election process remained unheeded; whereas the opposition candidates were divided over the issue of withdrawing from the electoral process, citing their lack of confidence in the process of voting and in the expected conduct of the vote count,

F. whereas, while the Constitution of Belarus prohibits censorship and monopolisation of the media and guarantees freedom of expression, few media outlets, overall, present independent views and opinions,

G. whereas, after the polls closed on Sunday evening, several hundred opposition supporters marched in Oktyabrskaya Square in Minsk city centre to demonstrate against the way in which the electoral process had been conducted,

H. whereas, a few days previously, the Belarusian authorities freed all remaining political prisoners, namely Alyaksandr Kazulin, Syarhei Parsyukevich and Andrei Kim,

1. Regrets that, in spite of the recent opening-up, the Belarusian Government has once again missed the opportunity to move closer to, and improve relations with, the EU by demonstrating its respect for democratic values; expresses its deep disappointment at the fact that these elections failed to show any real progress towards observing international and European standards;

2. Stresses that serious concerns remain with regard to fundamental rights of freedom of assembly and expression, and access by voters to a plurality of views necessary to make an informed choice; regrets that political parties played a minor role and that restrictions imposed by the state authorities did not allow a vibrant and genuinely competitive campaign;

3. Points out that, while the EU has welcomed the recent release of several democratic opposition activists and nurtured hopes for an improvement in the organisation of arrangements for elections, the persistent failure to organise free and fair elections will be a further set-back for Belarus and will continue to affect its relations with the European Union;

4. Is concerned that the opposition-staged rally on 28 September in Minsk was termed a gross violation of public order by the interior ministry, and is also concerned by reports that information on the rally will be submitted to the Office of the Prosecutor-General for legal appraisal; calls on the Belarusian authorities to respect the fundamental rights of freedom of assembly and expression;

5. Welcomes the release by the Belarusian authorities of the political prisoners Alyaksandr Kazulin, Syarhei Parsyukevich and Andrei Kim between 16 and 20 August; notes with satisfaction that their release means that no more internationally recognised political prisoners are currently incarcerated in Belarus;

6. Recalls that on 21 November 2006 the Europe Union declared its readiness to renew its relationship with Belarus and its people within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy as soon as the Belarusian Government demonstrates respect for democratic values and for the basic rights of the Belarusian people;

7. Regrets that the failed parliamentary elections on 28 September means that Belarus is still far from meeting the conditions set for improved and strengthened relations with the European Union, and calls on the Council, the Commission and the Member States to maintain pressure on the Belarusian authorities to respect democratic principles and the fundamental rights of its own citizens, and to be very prudent with any move which could be interpreted as a normalisation of relations, as long as there is no tangible progress in Belarus;

8. Calls on the Belarusian government to uphold and ensure the protection of all fundamental human rights and ensure Belarus' compliance with international standards, in particular with Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);

9. Calls on the Belarusian Government to follow up its statements about a willingness to improve cooperation with the EU with actions, and to create more favourable conditions for the eventual commencement of discussions between the EU and Belarus, by paying close attention to the internal situation in the country and launching negotiations on political, economic, social and human rights issues involving all political parties, opposition forces, NGOs, trade unions and youth organisations;

10. Calls on the Council and the Commission to take further steps towards the facilitation and liberalisation of visa procedures for Belarusian citizens, as such action is crucial to fulfil the main goal of EU policy towards Belarus, namely to facilitate and intensify people-to-people contacts and to democratise the country; urges them, in this context, to consider the scope for lowering the cost of visas for Belarusian citizens entering the Schengen Area, which is the only way to prevent Belarus and its citizens from becoming increasingly isolated;

11. Condemns the fact that Belarus is the only country in Europe which still has the death penalty, contrary to European and universal values;

12. Calls on the Belarusian authorities not to create any obstacles preventing Members of the European Parliament and national parliamentarians from visiting the country;

13. Expects the Council and the Commission to stay in touch with the democratic opposition and to extend more support to the civil society of Belarus and, in particular, to increase financial aid to the independent media, to NGOs and to Belarusian students studying abroad; welcomes the financial support given by the Commission to the European Humanities University in Vilnius (Lithuania);

14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the parliaments and governments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, and the Government of Belarus.

Recommended

Publication



[Call for tenders: Greens/EFA Consultation widget]

18.10.2026

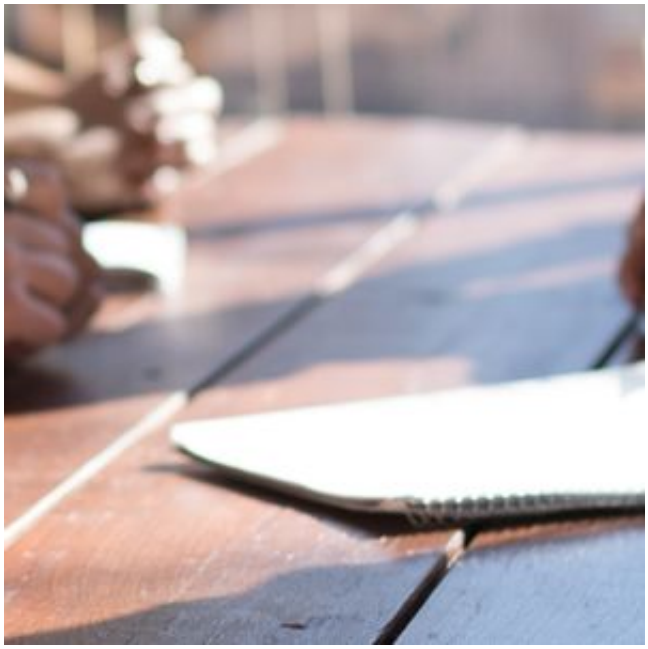
Publication



Call for tenders: The Greens/EFA CRM Software

08.10.2026

Publication



Human Resources Management System

02.10.2025

Publication



Heads of national delegations in the GREENS/EFA Group

11.03.2025

Please share

- E-Mail